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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION FROM
FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

REPORT
CD NO.

COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF INFORMATION 1949

SUBJECT Scientific - Medical industry

HOW PUBLISHED Weekly newspaper

DATE DIST. 31 March 1949

WHERE PUBLISHED Moscow

NO. OF PAGES 3

DATE PUBLISHED 2 March 1949

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

LANGUAGE Russian

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE Meditsinskiy Rabotnik, No 9, (821), 1949. (Information requested.)

PRODUCTION OF LABORATORY GLASSWARE FOR ANTIBIOTICS

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In 1948, the Klin Glass Factory was highly mechanized, with the result that it was possible to manufacture 120 million assorted ampules in that year. This factory is the largest under the jurisdiction of Glavmedprom, Ministry of Public Health USSR, and is the pride of the nation. At present, there is an intensive reconstruction program for which a budget of 21 million rubles has been allotted. During the past year, production was increased for the manufacture of glassware to meet the requirements of the public health, chemicopharmaceutical and penicillin industries. Production of glassware increased fivefold over 1940 production, and the operating personnel is ever striving for higher quality products.

The personnel of the Factory can be proud of their achievements. They have made it possible to effect economies in the glass-melting process amounting to more than 5 hours. But in spite of the excellence of the Klin Factory, we must not forget the over-all picture, for the glass industry in general is producing far less than requirements demand. The Klin Factory must lead the way in this struggle for higher production. It was noticed that the glass industry is already producing less than required by established standards. The January plan for the manufacture of flasks for the culture of penicillin was completed only by 81 percent. During the first 20 days of February, production sank to a low of 62 percent.

Many reasons for this lag can be traced to lack of equipment. For example, during the last quarter of 1948, a new-shaped flask was manufactured for penicillin culture. It was manufactured on semiautomatic equipment which had a total capacity of 5,000 flasks per shift. It is obvious that this is much below the requirements, if 1949 plans are to be fulfilled. The Ministry of Public Health was concerned and in November issued a decree that horizontal automatic turners should be installed for the manufacture of these flasks. So far nothing has been done to comply with the decree.

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Petrov, director of the Factory, and Goryachkin, its chief engineer, are busily engaged in developing an automatic machine which will greatly increase the rate of production of these flasks. They are applying their inventive genius toward the development of a single piece of equipment which will be capable of carrying out the complete process of manufacture of these flasks. A model has been completed, and it is now undergoing performance tests under actual factory operation.

However, in order to fulfill the present norms for penicillin flasks the factory needs about 20 of these automatic units. The Administration for the Production of Laboratory Glassware is not cooperating fully in this program. It was only this last December that a committee arrived at the Klin Factory to discuss construction and expansion. It is hoped that as a result of its visit the factory will be able to receive five automatic units which are now being assembled by the "Tekhnolog" Factory. Delivery is scheduled for April. The remaining 15 units are to be delivered in June.

Production is also hampered by the fact that consumers are constantly changing their requirements. For example, the Administration for the Production of Antibiotics has changed its flask dimensions three times in as many months. Representatives of the penicillin industry do not seem to understand that every change of dimensions requires a change in the adjustments on the semiautomatic and automatic equipment.

There are many other difficulties which have to be overcome. It is well known that the automatic machinery in the shaping shops is not operating at full capacity. There were many cases of waste due to the fact that there was foreign matter in the glass-melt compound, particularly aluminum additions. In 1948, operational and production losses reached the staggering sum of 530,000 rubles.

There is no efficient method for keeping glass dust out of the finished products. Very often glass dust finds its way into ampules. This creates a hazard. Various methods have been suggested for overcoming this undesirable condition, yet no one has put his plans into operation.

Many other aspects of the Klin Factory have to be modified. The furnaces are still handfed. The glass conglomerate is mixed by hand and the monorail which has been installed is inoperative. The process of heat-treating the glassware is controlled manually and no automatization exists until the process of sorting and grading the glassware.

Much has to be done this coming year. A new vat furnace has to be installed Among other things, the Klin Factory needs a shop for the production of apothecary dishes, a gas shop, a central boiler plant, and many more. This task rests on the shoulders of the personnel of Soyuzmedpromstroy. But, unfortunately, this great organization is not cooperating as well as it might. For example, the smokestacks for the vat furnace were to have been erected by the end of 1948. However, it is only now that the foundations of the stacks have been completed. Work on the foundations is progressing slowly without the aid of blueprints and at the rate of one working shift per day.

Matters concerning the power station are somewhat more complicated. The source of power for the Klin Station is supposed to be a Diesel unit to be supplied by the "Dizelmontazh" Trust, Ministry of Electrical Industries USSR. The Trust has sent the unit, but for the past 9 months there has been no one sent to assemble it and to put it into operation.

One of the most pressing needs is an expanded source of high-calorie gas. It is already foreseen that unless something is done very shortly, the shortage of gas will seriously curtail production of glassware. Nevertheless, Soyuzmedpromstroy is not only shirking its duty, but deliberately trying to prolong the negotiations as long as possible.

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